

The Bulletin

Meeks Street Church of Christ

1201 Meeks St. Corinth, Ms. 38834
Phone – (662) 808-7777

Visit Our Website at:
MeeksstreetchurchofChrist.com

June 11, 2023

“Being A Friend Of God Pt. 1”

By Brian Meade

James tells us about how faith and works justified Abraham— the great father of faith.

We read in James 2:21-23, *“Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God.”*



It may be surprising to most casual Bible students, but Abraham is also referenced as “friend of God” in two other places in Scripture. In 2 Chronicles 20:4, Jehoshaphat calls upon God to help them when faced with a great multitude of Moab and Ammonite armies who are attacking Judah. He says in verse 7, *“Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?”*

God hears their request and delivers them from this great threat of destruction on account of their looking to Him for salvation.

And in Isaiah 41:8, God gives His people assurance that He will deliver them once again out of hands of their enemies, and restore them as His people. Isaiah wrote, *“But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, The descendants of Abraham My friend.”* These words gave them hope to be the nation that was founded by the faith of Abraham, their father. God also shows that He is friend of Israel by giving their land back to them. It shows them that they need to be more like Abraham in faith and obedience to God.

What we can learn from Abraham and his friendship with God? Is it that God only had that friendship with Abraham exclusively? Or is God desires to have a friendship with all of us? I would even say God wants many friends

When we talk about desiring a relationship with God— and that’s really what a friendship is— we must think of it in terms of what it means to be a friend of someone we know now. That’s why God called Abraham a friend, so we would know something about that kind of relationship that they both had with one another.

Let’s take what we know about friendship and explore how we can be friends of God today.

I. Friends Share Things In Common.

One of the great aspects of friendship is that friends have common interests and things they share in common. This is why we are drawn to certain people to become their friend in the first place. The fact that we enjoy doing something together is strong influence in bringing people together and staying together.

The same can be true in a spiritual sense. Fellowship is based on sharing things in common. The Greek word for fellowship has that very meaning, *koinonia*, “communion, fellowship, sharing in common,” (Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (Vol. 2, p. 233).

Jesus said in John 15:13-15, *“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. 14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.”*

Notice the close personal relationship that Jesus had with His Disciples, as He calls them friends. This friendship that Jesus speaks of here is not just exclusive to the disciples, as the language doesn't seem to be just for them, but for all who obey Jesus. In Verse 14, Jesus tells us plainly, *"You are My friends if you do whatever I command you."*

There is similar language is used in Matthew 12:48-50, when Jesus' own mother and brothers were outside and wanted to speak to Him, then Jesus said, *"But He answered and said to the one who told Him, 'Who is My mother and who are My brothers?' And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, 'Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.'"*

This friendship with Jesus is only possible by obedience to the gospel that Jesus would give in Matthew 28:19-20 and Mark 16:15-16. One must be free from his past sins to have a friendship with Jesus, and then pattern their life around His teaching (Luke 6:40; Ephesians 4:13-15; Galatians 2:20; 3:27).

Our fellowship with the Father and Jesus depends On us coming out of the world and living holy, consecrated lives by following the Scriptures (1 John 1:1-3; vs. 7; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18). Jesus said in Matthew 5: 48, *"Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."* Peter said in 1 Peter 1:15-16, *"but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy.'"*

This is why Paul encouraged others to, *Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.*" (1 Corinthians 11:1).

II. Friends Are Close To Each Other.

Another great part of being a friend to someone is the closeness of the relationship that one has with their friend. When we are friends with someone, we want to be near them and with them because we desire a close relationship to them. It is a natural thing to want to be near someone whom we have an affinity with, and that is a special part of having a best friend we spend time with.

Jesus got very close to His disciples, and spent much time with them while He was preparing them for their mission as Apostles. John records these words in John 13:1, *"Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end."*

This closeness to Jesus can help us to understand the reaction of Peter when it was said to him that the resurrected Lord was near them on the beach. John tells of that occasion in John 21:7, *"Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!'"* Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea." Peter did not wait for the boat to get to land, but plunged into the sea and swam over to see the Lord. Why? One can easily surmise that Peter greatly desired to see Jesus, especially after being separated by the trial and crucifixion of his Lord. Peter's eagerness to be with Jesus once again is a touching story of how close their friendship was with each other.

Today, having a close relationship with our Lord is described in the Bible by the things we do to draw near to God. James 4:8 speaks of this closeness that we need to have, as he said, *"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded."*

Well, how can we have such a close friendship with God when we are not able to personally or physically interact with the Father or Jesus here in person on the earth? Right now, we recognize that God is in heaven and we are on the earth— and that makes it seem like God is so far away from us. But God and Jesus are closer to us than it seems. We have to make a choice to be near to God and this involves our actions that "by faith" God interacts with us (Isaiah 55:6-7; Acts 17:27-28).

We must desire to be close to God by:

1. Reading and studying His Word (1 Timothy 4:13-16; 2 Timothy 2:15).

If you really want to get close to God, you will spend time with Him in getting to know Him, as God gives us a knowledge of Him in the Scriptures. God speaks to us through the Word, and we need to listen to Him to truly be close to Him. The main point that Paul makes in 1 Corinthians 2:11-16 is, that the Holy Spirit has given us the mind of Christ in the Scriptures (vs. 16; Ephesians 4:20; Philippians 2:5).

2. Worshiping Him (John 4:23-24; Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:22-25).

God desires us to worship Him, and closeness to Him is one the results of our spending time with Him in worship. We are never more close to God than when we sing praises to His name (Colossians 3:17), hear His word proclaimed faithfully (Acts 20:7), pray to God fervently (Acts 16:25; 1 Peter 3:12), and are in communion with Christ, remembering His death (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

Let us strive to be as close to our Lord as we can be!

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Daniel Holloway, Debbie Keplinger, Sam Johnson, J F Dancer, Robbie, Sheila, Sherry Doles, Sandi Poole, Nathan Cox, Sandra Oliver, Chad Harris, Eli Johnson, Burt Ward, Jamie Jones, Janet Boren, David Boren, Fred Johnson, and Todd Bryan.
Doug George had a procedure last Friday and is recovering.
Sandi Poole is out of the hospital after some issues with her heart.

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer: Russell Briggs
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #1: *"Inconsistencies In The Bible"*

Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:

Workbook: Fred Johnson
Colossians
Author: Donnie V. Rader
Starting Page & Question: *Page #53, Question #2*

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Announcements: Paul Johnson
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading: Doug George
Scripture Reading: *Genesis 9:12-17*
Song Leader: Adam Harris
Lord's Supper: Jerry Kennemur
Assisting: — —
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #2: *"The True Meaning Of God's Rainbow"*
Closing Prayer: Blake Briggs

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

June 14, 2023

Auditorium Bible Class: Paul Busby
Workbook: Ezekiel
Author: Dan King
Starting Page & Question: *Page #27, Question #1*
Invitation: Dan Cottrell
Song Leader: Paul Busby
Closing Prayer: Blake Briggs



Visit our YouTube Channel:

Meeks Street Church of Christ https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgiXJxZC1oraOugO9qlfBtw?view_as=subscriber

And Our Facebook Page.

For sermon videos, articles, and announcements.

“Inconsistencies In The Bible”

Lesson Text: Romans 2:21-24. When We Fail To Be Consistent With God’s Word!

I. What Is Inconsistency?

Definition Of Inconsistency: 1. Not staying the same throughout. 2. Acting in variance with one’s own principles or former conduct. 3. Not compatible or In keeping with.

II. Examples Of Inconsistencies In The Bible.

- **Refusing To Do Some Sins— But Willfully Practicing Other Sins.**
 - James 2:10-12.
- **Teaching Others To Do Things— And Not Practicing Them Yourself.**
 - Matthew 23:1-4.
- **Claiming To Know God— But Not Obeying Him.**
 - 1 John 2:3-5.
- **Claiming Jesus Is Our Lord— But Not Doing What He Says.**
 - Luke 6:46.
- **Setting An Ox Free On The Sabbath— But Not A Person.**
 - Luke 13:10-17.
- **Professing Faith In God— But Showing No Works.**
 - James 2:14-18.
- **Accepting Some People— Refusing Others Whom God Accepts.**
 - Galatians 2:11-14.
- **Blessing Some People— While Cursing Others.**
 - James 3:8-12.
- **Loving God— While Hating Our Brother.**
 - 1 John 4:20-21.
- **Just Blessing Someone— Without Trying To Help Their Need.**
 - James 2:15-16; 1 John 3:17.
- **Building Monuments To Honor The Righteous— Then Killing Christ.**
 - Matthew 23:29-32.
- **Believing In Christ— But Not Willing to Confess Him.**
 - John 12:42-43; Luke 9:26.

III. Why Study This Lesson On Inconsistencies?

- To Learn God’s Attitude Toward Inconsistency In Our Lives.
- To Help Examine Our Lives And Avoid Anything Displeasing To God.

“The True Meaning Of The God’s Rainbow”

Lesson Text: **Genesis 9:12-17.**

I. God’s Memorial— The Rainbow.

- Why The First Rainbow Happened.
 - Because Of Sin- **Genesis 6:5-8.**
- God’s Judgment Against Sin In The Great Flood- **Genesis 7-8.**

II. What The Biblical Rainbow Also Symbolizes.

- The Power, Beauty, And Glory Of God- **Ezekiel 1:26-28; Revelation 4:2-5.**
- A Reminder Of God’s Past Punishment For Sin- **2 Peter 3:5-7.**
- Faithfulness In God’s Promises- **2 Peter 3:8-9.**
- That God Saves Those Who By Faith Obey Him- **Hebrews 11:7.**

III. The Rainbow’s New Meaning— As Given By LGBTQ+ Community.

- God Is The Originator Of The Rainbow— It Belongs To Him.
- The Rainbow Has Been Taken By Some For A Symbol Of Gay Pride.
- The History Of The Rainbow Pride Flag....
- The Month Of June Has Been Declared Pride Month.
- Today, One May See A Lot Of Retailers Catering To LGBTQ+ Merchandise.
 - Walmart, Target, Amazon, Youtube, Netflix, Skittles, & Others Have Joined In.
- It Doesn’t Matter How Many Join Forces To Uphold Sinful Conduct— Still Sin!
 - **Exodus 23:2; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.**
- How Did America Get On The Side Of This Sexual Immorality?
 - What Began As Toleration, Lead To Acceptance, and Now Full Support.
 - Politicians Began To Use The Support From LGBTQ+ Voters.
 - Retailers Saw This As An Opportunity To Make Money From Merchandise.
 - And There Has been Pressure To Conform With This Full Acceptance- **Rom. 12:2.**
 - We Need To Remember Why God Destroyed Sodom- **Genesis 19.**
2 Peter 2:6; Jude 7.

IV. How Should Christians Respond To This New Meaning?

- We Should Not Overreact Out Of Hate Or Fear With Any Violence.
 - We Are Already Accused Of Hate Speech and Phobia Against Them.
 - It Is Often That They Claim To Be Persecuted By Christians?!?
- Do Not Tolerate Or Condone Any Sinful Behavior.
 - It Is Compromise And Error To Accept Them As They Are In Sin- **Rom. 1:26-28.**
 - We Can Become Guilty Of Approving Sin- **Romans 1:32.**
- What We Trying To Do Is Save People From Sin & The Punishment Sin Bings.
 - **2 Corinthians 5:11.**
 - Love The Sinner, But Hate The Sin- **Jude 22-23.**
 - But speak the truth in love- **Ephesians 4:15.**